

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF November 13-14, 2014

Prepared on October 10, 2014

ITEM NUMBER: 6

Drought Conditions Update by Regional Liaison to Water Rights Division

STAFF CONTACT: Lisa McCann 805/549-3132 or lisa.mccann@waterboards.ca.gov

KEY INFORMATION:

Location: Region-Wide
Type of Activities: Permitting, Interagency Coordination, Technical Assistance, Grant and Loan Funding, Stakeholder Involvement

THIS ACTION: Board Discussion/Information/Direction

DISCUSSION

Central Coast Water Board staff is becoming more involved in tasks related to water rights to assist the State Water Board, given the high demand for staff resources under the current extreme drought conditions. Additionally, drought-related tasks continue to emerge through permitting, groundwater and spill cleanup and investigations, interagency coordination (since we regulate municipalities for wastewater discharges who also provide water supply), and grant-funding outreach. Staff is also seeking opportunities to facilitate or implement drought-related tasks regionally to address drought-related problems and limited water supply and availability with Central Coast Water Board water quality authorities.

Staff continues to track and facilitate drought assistance and water supply improvement in critical areas. See the specific area information in the subsequent section of this report.

Regional Liaison to Water Rights Division

Lisa McCann, Environmental Program Manager and Section Manager for the Watershed Planning and Protection Section, continues to serve as the Regional Liaison to the Water Rights Division. In this role, Ms. McCann does the following:

- Coordinate and provide information updates to the Central Coast Water Board and stakeholders regarding drought activities in the Central Coast Region
- Represent State Water Board staff, if needed, on local projects and to local agencies and stakeholders
- Facilitate stakeholders' needs with State Water Board activities and authorities to address and resolve local drought problems
- Coordinate and make Central Coast Water Board activities consistent with State Water Board activities, regulations and policies

State-wide Drought Information and Activities

Central Coast Water Board staff did not learn about any recent state-wide activities relevant to the Central Coast region.

Central Coast Water Board General Activities Related to DroughtDrought-Related Funding

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) administers the grant program pursuant to Proposition 84 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) funding for Drought Grants. On September 24, DWR announced draft funding awards which included \$12.3 million for the Pajaro River Watershed IRWM area (100% of their grant request) and \$2.5 million for the Santa Barbara Countywide IRWM area (62% of their grant request). The other IRWM areas in the Central Coast Region were not recommended for funding; this includes the San Luis Obispo IRWM area and funding for a portion of the emergency water supply project (3.75 million) in progress by the Cambria Community Services District. The Cambria Community Services District has notified the Department of Water Resources of the urgency for funding this project.

DWR notified the public of a comment period for the 2014 Drought Grant draft funding recommendations from September 23, 2014 through October 8, 2014. They also held a public comment meeting on September 30, 2014, to provide a brief presentation of draft funding recommendations.

Information on these funds and grants awards is at:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/implementation.cfm>

Other drought-related funding opportunities include the following and are further described at these links to webpages:

- [\\$4 Million in Funds for Interim Replacement Drinking Water for Economically Disadvantaged Communities](#)
- [Low Interest Loans for Water Recycling Projects](#)
- [Facilities Planning Grants for Water Recycling Projects](#)
- [\\$800 Million at 1 Percent for Water Recycling Projects](#)

Drought-Related Complaints

Central Coast Water Board staff continues to refer people with complaints related to water use and diversions to the State Water Board's Water Rights Enforcement webpage and the complaint form:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/enforcement/complaints/index.shtml

The State Water Board is giving highest priority to these types of complaints when they are in critical watersheds that have had water rights curtailed due to drought conditions or in watersheds that have resident endangered species.

Central Coast Water Board staff is providing the following response to the increasing number of public complaints or questions about the drought:

- The Central Coast Water Board does not have any direct authority over water supply or groundwater but we are helping the State Water Resources Control Board track where problems are occurring so we appreciate learning about the situation in XXXXX.
- Members of the public can file a complaint directly to the State Water Board to help our agency track these situations and then provide a link to the complaint reporting form and information which can be accessed at the "drought info" links on our webpages. The weblink is:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/index.shtml

At that link is information on filing a complaint about water rights or water use. Also at the link is information on funding...but there is not any funding directly for individual well owners, only for communities.

- The State Water Board is prioritizing their responses to these complaints based on the most serious water rights and water supply issues in the State so the individual may not receive a direct response.
- Central Coast Water Board staff recommends that members of the public contact local water purveyors/utilities and the cities/county they are in and explains that the local agencies may not be able to do anything about the situation directly (especially if it is groundwater related); however, the agencies might change their water supply and use management/policies if they know about the complaints (e.g., local wells drying up or overuse of water evidenced by excess irrigation runoff).
- The recent new state groundwater legislation will lead to local agencies managing their groundwater basins but the plans and institutional structure for that will not be in place for a few years.

Since the last Water Board Meeting and Drought Update Report, Central Coast Water Board received the following complaints/questions: 1) questions about a creek starting to flow, continuing for several days, after being dry for a while, in a location where the complainant thinks the cause might be a ranch upstream selling groundwater (Santa Barbara County); 2) inquiries about who to contact and funding for people with dry wells in Paso Robles and Nipomo.

Central Coast Water Board Activities Related to Communities with Critical Water Supply Conditions

Cambria

In response to the emergency drinking water conditions in Cambria, Central Coast Water Board staff continued to pursue permitting activities associated with the desalination and water supply project being developed by the Cambria Community Services District. Since the last Central Coast Water Board meeting and Drought Conditions update in September, Central Coast Water Board staff drafted, and made publicly available for comment, two Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Orders: 1) WDRs specific to the reinjection of recycled water subject to Title 22 drinking water standards and 2) WDRs for a surface impoundment (evaporation pond) that would receive reverse osmosis reject subject to Title 27 solid waste disposal standards. Both of these orders are on the Central Coast Water Board's meeting agenda for November 13-14, 2014 as individual agenda items following this agenda item report, Drought Conditions Update.

In order to evaluate information and propose these Orders on an expedited schedule, Central Coast Water Board staff has not been able to keep up on several other important permitting activities. This includes the following:

- Review and approval of the final construction quality assurance (CQA) plan for Chicago Grade, Paso Robles, and Tajiguas landfills- Each of these plans needs to be approved prior to authorizing the discharger to place waste in the newly lined module of their landfills, although we do allow them to place waste at their own risk in the new module while pending CQA documentation review and approval. Due to limitations in capacity at the landfills, dischargers may, in some cases, be forced to place the waste in the new cells at their own risk.
- Pre-winter inspections for some active or closed landfills typically conducted in the fall to ensure landfills are ready for the winter season.

- Review of July semiannual groundwater monitoring reports and wet-weather reports for high priority landfills.
- Review of a submitted joint technical document to update waste discharge requirements for a needed expansion at Cold Canyon landfill.
- Strategic planning meeting requests with landfill staff and their consultants (postponed), for example, discussions with Camp Roberts to discuss next steps for lead-impacted waste disposal.

Los Osos

The Los Osos water purveyors- Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSD), Golden State Water Company (GSWC), and S&T Mutual Water Company (S&T)- and the County of San Luis Obispo scheduled a meeting for October 20, 2013 to inform Central Coast Water Board staff about groundwater basin management activities and progress. These parties make up the “working group” pursuant to the Interlocutory Stipulated Judgement regarding Los Osos Groundwater Basin Management. The Central Coast Water Board Executive Officer, Ken Harris, Chair, Jean-Pierre Wolff, and managers, Harvey Packard and Lisa McCann, will attend the meeting. Central Coast Water Board staff, in coordination with State Water Resources Control Board Groundwater staff, will review an updated report on basin conditions and management activities. This report has been drafted but has not been shared with Central Coast Water Board staff or the public as of the writing of this report. However, as per conversations with the technical consultants to the LOCSD, Central Coast Water Board staff expects to receive the report in the next couple of months. After the meeting and review of the report, Central Coast Water Board staff will determine what next steps are appropriate to address the groundwater conditions and promote adequate groundwater basin management.

Morro Bay and Cayucos

Central Coast Water Board Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff and Executive Officer Ken Harris attended a joint meeting of the Morro Bay City Council and Cayucos Sanitary District Board on October 10, 2014. Discussion was centered on the timeline and process to make a final selection between two options for a new wastewater treatment plant to serve both communities. Dr. Wolff and Mr. Harris were asked to give their perspectives on the options for possible joint regional facilities that will serve as sources of potable water for the two communities and the greater San Luis Obispo region. This decision is extremely important in light of the current drought and the State’s increasing emphasis on using reclaimed water to provide potable water, and serves as an example for the entire Central Coast Region.

Santa Barbara Area

City of Santa Barbara is planning to reactivate the Charles E. Meyer Desalination Facility. Central Coast Water Board and State Water Board staff persons are currently evaluating permitting issues and terms. Modification of their existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit is currently scheduled for the Central Coast Water Board’s January 2015 meeting in Santa Barbara. The status of the project is described at the following City of Santa Barbara webpage:

<http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/pw/resources/system/sources/desalination.asp>

In order to evaluate information and propose the revised NPDES permit, Central Coast Water Board staff has not been able to keep up on several other important permitting activities. This includes the following:

- Review of key report for the Diablo Canyon Power Plant addressing the installation of saltwater cooling towers in the South parking lot - Bechtel’s *Draft Final Addendum to the*

Independent Third-Party Final Technologies Assessment for the Alternative Cooling Technologies or Modifications to the Existing Once-Through Cooling System.

- Respond to City of Lompoc request to evaluate their Waste Water Treatment Plant's Toxic Reduction Evaluation and modify their NPDES permit.
- Writing expired NPDES permit renewals for Moss Landing Commercial Park and Diablo Canyon Power Plant.
- Inspecting assigned NPDES permitted facilities (i.e. Santa Cruz, MRWPCA, CAWD, Scotts Valley, Lompoc, Montecito, Carpinteria, Summerland, Goleta, Cuyama, Moss Landing Commercial Park, Moss Landing Power Plant, and Diablo Canyon Power Plant).
- Review of applications to enroll several facilities under the General Aquaculture Permit in the Moss Landing area.
- Review of reports following dredging activities to determine permit compliance (i.e. Morro Bay Pier replacement project, tidal wetland project, etc.).
- Respond to General Permit enrollee requests regarding Monitoring and Reporting Program changes.
- Review of electronic Self-Monitoring Reports in detail, instead relying on our engineering student intern to do the report reviews.

CONCLUSION

Given the severity of the drought and the high volume of work in response for the State Board Division of Water Rights, Central Coast Water Board staff will continue to track drought-related activities and issues in the region and provide assistance to stakeholders and the State Water Board as needed. Additionally, Central Coast Water Board staff will take drought conditions and impacts to beneficial uses and water quality into account as we continue to conduct permitting, groundwater and spill cleanup and investigations, interagency coordination and grant-funding outreach or other business affected by the drought.